

# Flooding neighborhood



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The house I live now is located on a low-lying street. Each time when it rains, the water comes into the back of our house, pouring under the door of the kitchen. Whose fault is it?

Every house on our street has concrete floors to protect flooding and it helped a little till Integris MarshallCountyMedicalCenter, located in our low area, had build a concrete slab in the late 80s. This MedicalCenter serves 30,000 residents in providing general and acute health and hospital services. The building had a basement entrance located below the ground and to protect the facility and its patients they took the decision, which foreseeably would damage the whole neighborhoods by more severe flooding.

The inhabitants of the neighborhood have been suffering from floods since the time immemorial, such as instead of low-lying territory no one of the local committee cared about drainage system building. But even concrete floors, which were done to protect houses from moisture by citizens themselves, do not help any more after the MedicalCenter concrete slab building. As a result, the situation, which used to be bad, turned even worse.

The main reason of the flood in our neighborhood is low location. All the water from the region flows to our homes. Other reasons are the total absence of any drainage system and any drainage ditches, what is caused by poor water and sewerage management and lack of flood control measures.

To protect their properties people even can not insure it, because law writes that flood insurance is not accessible o the people who own their homes because of the flooding. In some protective decision finding many residents

have filed law suits and won on the grounds that MedicalCenter landscaped its property so that the amount of water running onto the claimants' yards doubled every year and this damage was reasonably foreseeable.

MedicalCenter paid the compensation for claimants' losses but did not stop the flooding. It is obvious that the demolition of the concrete slab will not solve the long-lasting problem, but will just bring less damage for people, while damaging the hospital more.

My landlady told that they started suing in 2002 and won a settlement just in 2006. Long years of nerves, spending and anticipation did not release the sadness of the problem, so did the settlement. Money covered some spending for the damage eliminating and buying some other flood protective supplements, such as sump pumps, but did not solve the problem. From the MedicalCenter protective slab water continues running more heavily across their yards to and under their fundaments, soaking into their house and under its floor.

The both MedicalCenter and residents suffer in this neglected situation. The first can not pull down the slab, because it may lead to the Center closing, when it is needed, thus constantly has to pay off compensations to the suffering from the heavier flood neighborhoods without any problem solving. The second need wait for years suing for damage settlements and even winning continue suffering from the same problem.

Since today, no decisions besides compensations have been taken. Is this issue in the deadlock? No, but people continue suffering and being at law with MedicalCenter, when solution is so close. The wisest decision is to rally

people, hospital, and authorities and solve the problem once and for all. The first things which should be done are regular maintenance and instant building of the drainage system and further cleaning of the roads and removing of the debris and solid waste for better its work providing. Of course all these actions for adaptation to the existing weather conditions should be financed. It may be done by the city, which is responsible for this issue, or MedicalCenter itself. In this way, the latter will avoid paying recurrent compensation to the people and weaken the opposition of the city's residents. The third protection measure which should be done immediately is the construction of large tanks, where the rain water will be stored. Puncturing the ground in several places, like it is done for rainwater harvesting, may be useful too. Besides these immediate actions, the future plan for construction of underground tunnels that will alleviate the flooding should be scheduled and brought into life as soon as possible. Inhabitants, for their part, have to protect themselves by the soil bags barriers and sump pumps.

It is clear that only the cooperative financing and effort by city authorities, Medical Center, and the residents concerned, can alleviate the problem and solve the ongoing conflict. We should not stay angry and stubborn.

Neighborhood's flood is the neighborhood's problem, which can be solved only by the whole neighborhood's decision and support. Let's solve it together once and for all!